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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries can help solve the problem of escalating costs by seeking grants and gifts to supplement funds from their parent institution. Issues to be considered in looking for funding sources include: (1) institutional support, including funds from the college or university budget, communication with administration, and assistance from development staff members; (2) grant opportunities, including identifying sources, granting agency guidelines, and time factor; (3) library needs, including identifying appropriate projects for funding and the importance of administrative support; (4) individual supporters as a means to strengthen proposals; and (5) cash or in-kind gifts. Examples of funding agencies, a checklist of grant opportunities, and a checklist of library needs are attached. (KRN)

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SUPPLEMENTING LIBRARY BUDGETS THROUGH GRANTS AND GIFTS

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INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are faced with escalating costs to provide the information services demanded by their clientele. However, enrollment declines have made it difficult for institutions to increase funding for library support. Many librarians, therefore, are looking for funding sources to supplement their institution's support.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Although librarians must take the initiative in identifying possible sources of additional funding, they should not ignore the principal source of funding for their library. In the case of an academic library, this would include funds from the college or university budget. Grant and gift income is not intended to replace the primary funding source or to encourage the administrators who determine the library's share of those funds to grow complacent regarding increases. Rather, grants and gifts serve to supplement and, in some cases, to challenge administrators to increase institutionally controlled funding.

Communication is a critical factor in budget management and enhancement. Administrators must be advised of library needs before they can respond with additional funding from internal sources, whether immediately or at a later date. The Development Office is usually charged with responsibility for coordinating external pursuit of resources for the benefit of the entire institution. It is essential, therefore, for librarians to know and work with the appropriate members of this department in any attempt to enhance the library's budget.

Development staff members may be able to suggest appropriate granting entities for proposed library projects. They may have personal contacts with staff members at a granting agency whom they can recommend for initial conversation regarding a proposal. Finally, development staff who are kept informed of library needs will be more likely to include such library programs in fund-raising campaigns that originate in their offices.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The creative challenge for librarians seeking to supplement their budgets from external sources is to identify funding opportunities for library needs and library needs that relate to potential funding opportunities. Successful fund raisers are continually and simultaneously looking for funding sources

and library projects.

There are many directories of funding agencies and a variety of books that present general fund-raising ideas for libraries. A selection of these sources is included.

Figure 1 outlines the types of funding programs available for librarians to pursue. There are agencies that distribute public funds through federal and state programs and agencies that distribute private funds through foundations, corporate giving programs, and service organizations.

Figure 2 presents a checklist of considerations to be made in evaluating sources of grant funds. Initially, it is necessary to review the scope of projects funded to date by an agency and to determine whether any of those awards were to libraries directly or for library-related activities. If the agency has funded libraries in the past, were such awards restricted based on library type--academic, public, special?

Public granting agency guidelines are usually very specific about what they will and will not fund. However, private agencies are less so. A private granting agency should not be dismissed from consideration just because there is no record of funding to libraries. If your library is within the region that they fund and the project meets general interest guidelines, a letter or phone call of inquiry may be appropriate.

For some granting agencies, geographical location is used to screen the requests that are considered. For other agencies, geographical location may be a bonus, if the request originates from a state or region that is considered under-represented in previous award action.

All granting agencies have guidelines for the expenses they will and will not fund when considering proposals. For example, some agencies will not fund personnel costs or equipment purchases. In some cases, agencies also dictate certain types of activities in funded projects. In humanities projects, there must be involvement by humanities scholars. It is important to review these guidelines, to determine whether they will enhance or interfere with a proposed project.

The source of funds used for making awards may be inconsistent and, therefore, it is useful to insure that a granting agency is still actively awarding funds. Most agencies have published guidelines that indicate the special

areas of consideration when selecting recipients for awards. It is critical for the request narrative to emphasize how these considerations relate to a proposed project. In addition, it is important to review any published statement that discusses broad funding goals for a granting agency and consider how these goals are met by a library proposal.

The granting process is one of deadlines and timetables. It is necessary to consider whether the proposed idea can be accommodated within the deadline, review, and notification process. In addition, if an award is received, are there time factors for completion and will the proposal work within those time constraints?

Finally, a personal contact with a representative of the granting agency may both clarify questions that are raised in reviewing published information and allow an opportunity to test an idea for funding.

LIBRARY NEEDS

Evaluating library needs and projects to determine which might be feasible for seeking grant funding should be considered as an opportunity for creativity. While some library projects are obvious candidates for grant funds, most are not. Figure 3 is a checklist of considerations to review when identifying a need within the library that might be fulfilled with grant funds.

To seek grant funds, it must be possible to isolate a library need for funding purposes. In fact, such a need must have direct financial costs attached. It is essential that a need can be described in terms of a project or program and that there be some element of uniqueness. The benefits of meeting a specific library need must be demonstrated, and it must be clear who will benefit.

Institutional support for a library project as it moves through a granting process will be critical. Some projects will seek grant funds for start-up costs only and will require a commitment from the institution, often in writing, to insure that ongoing funding will be forthcoming.

In some cases there may be some funding available for a project, either from the institution directly or from other sources that could be redirected to other library projects if grant funds were obtained. If a grant requires a matching cash component, these funds would also be available.

A project that is identified for the library must have an associated flexibility in the schedule. In most cases, grants are not given for emergency situations, but rather are the result of a process that requires an investment of time to develop and submit a proposal and to review and select proposals for funding.

In conceiving the idea for a grant project, in developing the justification used in a formal request for funding, and in managing the activities of a funded proposal, it is critical that the importance of the project to the operation and/or mission of the library be clear. The grant process from beginning to end can be long and frustrating. It is a time-consuming task to gather the data necessary to create a strong proposal. If funded, the project requires that special documentation be maintained for reporting purposes to the granting agency. The importance of the project to members of the library staff and the library's user community at large will insure that the challenges of the grant process are met thoroughly.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

In considering ways to enhance and supplement the budget of the library, it is important not to overlook the role that individuals might play. For example, when considering granting agencies, there may be individuals who would be willing to support a proposal by writing a letter of endorsement. For some federal programs, letters of support from elected officials will serve to strengthen the library's case. Individuals who are employees of corporations with giving programs may be willing to hand-deliver a proposal, make a personal recommendation, and insure that the appropriate office receives the document.

Library friends groups have been used as a means to develop outside interest in libraries and gain financial support for library programs. Although more common in public libraries, such groups are being successfully formed in association with academic libraries. The tangible community support that is embodied in a successful friends organization is often a valuable component of formal proposals to outside granting agencies.

GIFTS--CASH OR INKIND

An alternative to actually supplementing a library budget with dollars is to identify needs that might be met with gifts that are inkind in nature. Companies, both large and small,

that are unwilling to consider a cash gift may be interested in receiving a proposal for a product that they manufacture or distribute. In some cases, such proposals might include the purchase of some products and/or services in combination with an inkind gift.

SUMMARY

Library budgets can be supplemented successfully through grants and gifts. The process for identifying and procuring such funds, however, requires creativity and perseverance. Success in this arena can have unexpected side effects. The administration may assume that all future special projects in the library can be funded through grants. On the other hand, the willingness of librarians to actively seek outside sources of funding demonstrates an awareness of the pressures placed on academic operating budgets and may result in a strengthening of support for the library from the administration.

Librarians seeking to obtain grant funds must be prepared for the disppointment of polite letters rejecting the opportunity to fund a proposal. Those librarians who never seek grant funds will never be disappointed. Librarians who work to identify funding sources and library projects are continually surrounded by the optimism of possibility. When creativity and perseverance result in a proposal being funded the euphoria is indescribable. The result of such behavior may be a grant-seeking enthusiast.

FIGURE 1

EXAMPLES OF FUNDING AGENCIES

1. Federal Granting Agencies

   a. U.S. Department of Education
   b. National Endowment for the Humanities

2. State Granting Agencies

   a. Arts Council
   b. Committee on the Humanities

3. Foundations

   a. National
      --Carnegie
      --Ford
      --Pew Charitable Trust
   b. Regional
   c. Local

4. Corporate Foundations

   a. US West
   b. 3M
   c. IBM

5. Organizations

   a. DAR Chapter
   b. AAUW
   c. Sons of Norway, or ethnic heritage groups

FIGURE 2

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

A CHECKLIST

1. Scope of projects funded
2. Restrictions on type of library
3. Geographical limits
4. Guidelines for activities of projects funded
5. Actively making awards
6. Criteria for making awards
7. Deadlines/Timetables
8. Personal contacts

FIGURE 3

LIBRARY NEEDS

A CHECKLIST

1. Isolated for funding purposes
2. Described as a project or program; element of uniqueness
3. Benefits of meeting need; audience to benefit
4. Institutional support
5. Opportunity to redirect available funds--institutional or not--for the project
6. Ability to provide matching funds
7. Flexibility within schedule for meeting need
8. Importance of project to the operation/mission of the library

SOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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